

cultural competency in California's domestic violence field

As California's communities grow increasingly diverse, differences in social and cultural norms become increasingly important in considering how to provide accessible and high quality domestic violence (DV) services, including outreach, prevention, and advocacy. This is especially true given that certain groups – African Americans, American Indians, and in some cases, recent immigrants and non-English speaking communities (including those of Latina and Asian/Pacific Islander descent) – may experience higher rates of DV than the general population¹. And despite being disproportionately affected by DV, survivors from these communities may be less likely to access services.

Blue Shield of California Foundation recognizes these disparities and is committed to ensuring that comprehensive, high quality DV services are accessible for all survivors and families.

The Needs of Diverse Communities

In response to anecdotal evidence from grantees, the Foundation's domestic violence program, Blue Shield Against Violence, undertook research to document DV rates among different demographic groups and success stories of providers serving Californians in greatest need of help who are not accessing existing DV services. This research found that:

- Due to the economic downturn, service providers are stretched, and as a result, the needs of survivors from diverse communities may be especially underserved;
- Service providers often do not have the adequate support, training, and resources to provide services that are responsive to a survivor's cultural and personal circumstances; and
- A lack of culturally competent services, including outreach, prevention, and advocacy, may be one barrier to service access for high-need groups.

Cultural competency is the provision of linguistically- and culturally-sensitive – and responsive – services. It is a deep understanding of how someone's specific culture may require different approaches to care, whether that be speaking her language, adapting to religious or cultural customs and preferences, and generally focusing on her individual needs and concerns.

¹Tjaden, P. and Thoennes, N. "Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women," 2000(b). Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. <http://www.nij.gov/pubs-sum/183781.htm>.

What We're Doing

Based on this research, in 2011 Blue Shield Against Violence prioritized cultural competency in order to address the needs of some of the most vulnerable Californians – African Americans, American Indians, and recent immigrants and non-English speaking communities. The Foundation made 17 two-year grants totaling \$2.62 million to:

- Engage DV survivors and community members to increase awareness and to promote practice of culturally competent DV-related outreach, prevention, and advocacy
- Strengthen organizations' DV-related, cultural competency efforts
- Promote a more connected and culturally-competent response to DV among new and existing partners and stakeholders

These grantees will also join a Cultural Competency learning community to problem-solve, reflect on their work, disseminate knowledge, and share lessons learned.

2011/12 Grantees

Population	Organizations
African Americans	California Black Women's Health Project Interval House - African-American Network for Violence Free Relationships Jenesse Center Women's Center of San Joaquin County
Recent Immigrants	Asian Women's Shelter Casa de Esperanza Center for Community Solutions East Los Angeles Women's Center Korean American Family Service Center Mujeres Unidas y Activas My Sister's House Tides Center – Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence Visión y Compromiso
American Indians	Humboldt Domestic Violence Services Inter-Tribal Council of California Rural Human Services
African Americans, American Indians, and Recent Immigrants	DeafHope

Join us

The cultural competency grantees will launch their 18-month projects in early 2012. To learn more and to track the progress of the grantees' projects, visit Blue Shield Against Violence's page at blueshieldcafoundation.org.